

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT.

JOHN C KING, M D., Banning.

Gentlemen of the Society: The constitution of this society imposes upon your president the duty of delivering an address and, by implication, imposes upon you the burden of listening to it. We cannot well avoid either the duty or the burden, but we may lighten them for each other a tiny bit by the exchange of a little mutual sympathy. My address will not be dignified by a title. I will simply try to talk for a few moments about the society itself, its needs and some things it does not need.

And first, permit me to thank you for the privilege of addressing you from this platform. The office you have conferred upon me is the richest gift within the power of the profession of this great state to bestow. Any recipient of the honor may be pardoned for a reasonable display of elation and pride. It has always seemed to me there were only two reasons why any one should be chosen president of this society. First, because of such acknowledged eminence that his election would add prestige to our body. Second, because of some conspicuous service rendered to the society, meriting reward. Obviously, I do not belong to either category and, therefore, you must have chosen me for reasons not personal to myself. Usually, and naturally, our presiding officer is sought in large centers, where colleges, hospitals, laboratories, enable men to grow bigger, to loom larger. In the country, environment is unkind to our development. All over California, in hundreds of hamlets, from the desert to the sea, are country doctors; earnest, studious, painstaking fellows, doing fairly good work—in spite of isolation, inadequate facilities and meagre incomes. Men who are forever striving just to keep up, never hoping to lead. And yet, the medical profession owes this debt to these men. Through their characters, and the quality of the work they have done, they have won for the profession the esteem and the confidence of the mass of the people; for the mass still lives in the country, not in the city. And when your consultation rooms are filled with country callers, please remember they are not there because of the inefficiency of the home doctor, but because his life and work have inspired their trust in all doctors. Now gentlemen I distinctly realize that my election was owing to your generous desire to recognize this class of men, the class to which I belong. And in their behalf I thank you very sincerely.

The secretary has frequently drawn our attention to the fact that he is not the society; meaning thereby, that no matter how strenuous and efficient his work may be, success can only be achieved through co-operation. Now the secretary is the most important single factor in our society work. If the fact alluded to be true of him, how much truer it is of the president, who is merely your executive servant. Whatever success may attend this meeting will depend, not on the president, nor upon all the officers combined, nor yet upon the efforts of our most cultured and thoroughly trained members, but upon the co-operation of all, both weak and strong. And I wish to thank you, in advance, for the co-operative spirit you will manifest at this meeting.

Last April, in San Francisco, several gentlemen whom we all admire and respect, asserted, in my presence, that there is too much politics in our State Society; that it is run by a clique. A few weeks later in Los Angeles, I listened to the same criticism and, in addition, to some invidious comparisons between the Southern California and the State Societies. The former is, in some few respects, the model society of the Coast. It has three hundred or more members, its semi-annual meetings attract from one to two hundred, its scientific work is excellent, its social functions more than pleasing, it has developed harmony and friendship among the men of the South, it is absolutely free from politics and cliquism. Such societies are exceedingly valuable. But should the State Society imitate such a model it would at once forfeit its present usefulness, which depends largely upon politics. The word "politics" has, to many minds, become synonymous with chicanery and trickery. True politics is the science and practice of government; the adjustment of the relation of the individual to the state. The development of the medical sciences during the past few years has rendered re-adjustment necessary. I need only refer, for proof, to the new powers vested in State Boards of Health and of Medical Examiners and to the fact that every legislative body, municipal, state and national, is wrestling with medical problems, striving to enact laws that will properly adjust the hygienic relations of the individual to the state.

The medical profession is, and of right ought to be, the guide and arbiter in such matters, because no other class of men devotes its life to these problems. This fact is instinctively recognized by lawmakers and jurists. For instance, the U. S. Pharmacopeia is, by congressional action, the American standard of pure drugs; the Association of American Medical Colleges is our state standard of medical education, validated by our supreme court. The American Medical Association is the authorized and recognized exponent of American medicine. It includes the great mass of our most advanced thinkers and ablest practitioners. Its functions are twofold. First to develop medical science, to the end that each of us may become better qualified. Second, preventive medicine, embracing medical education or the prevention of quackery; the prevention of mosquito, fly and water borne diseases; school hygiene; child and woman labor; asylums and reformatories; prevention of venereal and dozens of other problems which are essentially political as well as medical. Now pure politics breeds antagonism among the ignorant and unrighteous, just as impure politics arouses opposition from the more honorable and better educated. Witness, the "League for Medical Freedom" that is to destroy the Great American Medical Trust—at the behest of the manufacturers of proprietaries and patents, the chiropractics, chiropodists, *et id omne genus*. The only medical trust in existence is the fact that the majority of the people trust their lives to us. The American Medical Association has no fee bill, no state society in America has one. The whole realm of preventive medicine detracts from our incomes rather than adds to them. These statements

are foolishly trite to us but are unbelieved by the people. The state society is an integral, a component part of the A. M. A. and must have politics. For some years past the state itself has made us a political factor by requiring us to elect or to nominate the members of the State Board of Examiners. This board brings our society into personal contact with every new practitioner and enables us to elevate our own standard. We publish a medical journal, and its publication involves questions of politics, ethical, business, medical. We dispose of a considerable cash income. We publish a register. We have a legislative committee and through it hope to influence such legislation as I have spoken of. We do many things that necessarily involve politics. They are the glory of this society. Scientific work is undoubtedly the major reason for our existence, but we must not overlook our other functions. We have approximately 2,000 members. If these were all chumps we would have plain sailing, no politics; they would simply follow a few leaders. As a fact, our membership comprises a very large proportion of the cultured and educated physicians of this state. These people have opinions based on education and sound sense. They do not all agree upon religious, social, business or political questions. It is unfair to expect them to agree upon society politics. Many of them would edit the JOURNAL differently; would expend our income in other, perhaps better ways; would prefer legislation along other lines. And yet, as in all politics, the majority must rule. I am sure our average intelligence is such that we will commit no vital error.

Now, is our society ruled by a majority or is it run by a clique? Please remember that our governing house is a delegated body, that its personnel changes from year to year. If you think a clique is in control, all you have to do is to get out and work in the primaries, elect the delegates you want. Some men remain in office year after year; possibly some men ought to, because it would be difficult for the society to replace the work they are doing. But no man can ever get in or keep in unless the delegates want him.

When I entered the profession, thirty-seven years ago, hygiene was an esoteric science, a knowledge of it was limited to the initiated, to so-called experts. The general public, and even the common herd of doctors, were not supposed to have the time or the intelligence to apprehend its intricacies. Furthermore, it was deemed unethical for those possessing such information to attempt to impart it to the said public through daily papers or current magazines; such a course was held to be a cheap method of advertising the individual. Time effects many changes. To-day we know the success of preventive medicine depends upon the education and sympathetic co-operation of the very public we formerly ignored. My text for this topic will be found in a letter written by the principal of a high school in a county seat not far from San Francisco. The writer was a former patient of mine, hence the letter. The recent register records nine doctors in that town, seven of whom are members of this society, but the writer does not state how many or which ones he consulted. First, since moving to that town (the

writer averred) his family has suffered from malaria. Second, mosquitoes abound. Third, upon inquiry among local doctors, he was told the mosquito theory of malarial infection was the product of ultra-scientific men who had no practical experience; that he need not fear mosquitoes nor go to any expense to protect his family from them. My comment upon the text is that our societies should devote more time to the common things of medicine, the things we erroneously suppose we all know about. And further, that upon us rests the burden of educating that small segment of the public that each of us can influence individually.

To-day, the problem of combating flies, mosquitoes, ticks and other hosts and carriers of pathogenic germs is the citadel which our warfare against disease is attacking. School hygiene, decent toilets, contamination of water supplies and similar questions are of as much importance to the country as to the city doctor. First, we must equip ourselves. The average city doctor can, perhaps, afford to be below par because he can always find some one to help him. But we of the country, isolated from professional assistance, should be as much ashamed to be without laboratories and libraries adequate to our needs as we would be ashamed to be unable to do a decent appendectomy. Second, we must try to raise the people to our own standard; induce them to see things from our viewpoint. The columns of our local papers are accessible to us all. Personally, I have had better results from talks to woman's clubs than from other methods. It is foolish for us to study these questions, settle certain principles, and then be angry with the people because they do not see things as we do. How shall they know without teachers? We need not fear that some of us may do these things for the sake of notoriety. The public is discriminating enough to recognize the man who "plays to the galleries." The only thing we need to fear is the public announcement of half digested fads and theories, the product of our own lack of study and equipment. In this connection, allow me to suggest that our very valuable State Board of Health Reports should be in every public library and should be mailed to every public school in the state.

The Sanatorium fad deserves more than passing notice. That hundreds of patients patronize these places who would do better under intelligent care at home, goes without saying. That well conducted institutions are an absolute essential to other hundreds, is an established fact. With the individual patient we have nothing to do. But the proper conduct and administration of sanatoria has become a problem of public policy. We have sanatoria for tuberculosis, for nervous and mental diseases, for drug habitues and for almost everything else. Many of them deserve the confidence and support of the profession, many do not. Some are established by men who have had no training for the purpose. Others are run by so-called trained nurses, still others are fakes, pure and simple. I know of two such places, both fairly well patronized, where tubercular patients are kept without ordinary hygienic regulations regarding even the disposal of sputum. These sanatoria are multi-

plying at a rapid rate. The undeserving are soliciting and receiving patronage based upon the reputation of the better sort. State inspection and control of these places is, perhaps, utopian. It seems to me, however, that for the protection of our own members and of the many Eastern physicians who send patients to California, our society should grant its official sanction to such as are worthy and publish them in the JOURNAL. We could appoint a committee or commission, whose function it would be to establish a minimum standard of equipment and method, to personally investigate institutions and to grant or withhold its approval for a specified term. This investigation would, of course, be limited to those places asking for it; each of which would pay a fee sufficient to cover the charge of publication in the JOURNAL. I am sure that some such plan would redound to the advantage of legitimate institutions and also to the advantage of those who direct patients to them. It would seem to me, the prestige of indorsement by an official commission of this society would ultimately induce worthy sanatoria to seek it, while mere lack of endorsement would curtail the number and patronage of the unworthy.

Our House of Delegates will receive a report from its committee on Contract Practice. It would be out of place for me to anticipate the nature of this report or to attempt to influence the disposal of it. But I may be permitted to emphasize its unusual importance. From England, Germany, Austria and Canada come bitter complaints of the devastating effects of this evil upon the finances of our profession, and all the while the unparalleled progress of the medical sciences demands increased outlay on the part of the doctor who pretends to keep abreast of the times. The incomes of hundreds of our city doctors are being affected and the baneful practice is infiltrating the smaller towns and the country. We must protect ourselves, if we are to have any protection. I hope all members will assist the House in arriving at some wise decision, assist by manifesting discreet interest and friendly counsel.

During the past year the Western Surgical Association, through its president, has been investigating a kindred topic; fee division, joint fees, secret commissions and other forms of graft. That such an investigation is needful is evidence of lax moral tone in our profession. The surgeon pays twenty-five dollars to the "doctor" who sends the patient, the druggist pays twenty per cent. commission to the "doctor" who sends the prescription, the undertaker pays commission to the "doctor" who steers some poor widow to the coffin shop. These business transactions are similar, they are all on the same moral plane. It is quite unnecessary to inquire why such things are wrong. One never asks why the command was given "Thou shalt not steal." Any of us may sell our souls for money without arousing the interest of this society, but when a member barter the good name of the profession for coin the society should at once become alert. Each county society is arbiter of its own membership and should be very jealous of its type.

For many years the warfare against legitimate,

scientific medicine has centered upon the law creating the State Board of Examiners. Many in the profession, who have failed to apprehend the real aim and origin of the attack, have supposed that abrogation of that law, or its lax enforcement, would obviate further trouble. Indeed, some of our own members have supposed the law itself was the one and only bone of contention. Personally, I do not, for one moment, think that opposition to the law was other than part of an organized scheme to destroy modern preventive medicine. A study of the recent legislature will convince the most skeptical that the organization is both powerful and wise. The bill requiring physicians to practice under their own names, the bill to provide medical inspection of schools in certain cities; in fact, all bills conserving public health, were killed. The anti-vaccination law and the amended Hurd bill were passed. All this was accomplished with the avowed intention to destroy the so-called medical trust.

California is now represented in the U. S. Senate by a leading Christian Scientist, who will undoubtedly antagonize medical legislation there. Influential reviews, like the *"Arena,"* together with influential weeklies and dailies, like *Los Angeles Times*, have consistently and persistently attacked all forms of preventive medicine and all schools of scientific medical practice. Our efforts to oppose these conditions have been fitful and sporadic. A few have done hard work and good work, but our legislative committee has not been a homogeneous body nor has it accomplished much, as a committee. Many of us have been indifferent to the situation, or worse. To my mind, if we really mean business, we must work along other lines. For instance, when the senator from Riverside sought re-election, our County Society indorsed him and every member, regardless of political party affiliation, went to work for him, because he had done all in his power to advance public health laws. The Riverside representative, also, knowing the influence of our members among the people, has consulted us regarding all such questions. Our legislative committee should consist of men who will maintain a permanent bureau, who will expend time and money for the cause, will organize the profession of each county into a political unit. It is difficult to influence legislators during the rush, the turmoil and the trading of a busy session. It is easier to influence and pledge men who are uncertain of the results of an approaching election. Three thousand organized and united doctors can wield an immense power. This should be the aim of the committee. The Anti-Medical League referred to maintains a press bureau and is flooding the weekly and daily papers with anti-medical literature. In Riverside county the largest daily turns over all this material to a member of our County Society for editorial scrutiny. We should keep out of politics or do politics. There are those among us who make a fetish of professional dignity. As a matter of fact, the fight is before us. It is futile to attempt to ignore the situation. Moreover, the fight is not for personal or professional aggrandizement. It is one of the noblest battles that any body of serious, intelligent, honorable men can engage in. It is a fight

for the health of the people, against ignorance, superstition and charlatanism.

Probably no function we perform is more important than the nomination of members of the State Board of Medical Examiners. This must be done before we adjourn. It is unwise to defer consideration of men and the measures they advocate until the moment of election. While the delegates elect, every member should devote time, thought and influence to this question. The society should determine what policy it wishes the Board to be governed by, and should select men who will execute that policy intelligently, fearlessly and tactfully. The existing Board deserves kindly recognition of the excellent work it has done. It has maintained a fairly high standard, tempered by a discreet recognition of the difficulty of determining any man's ability by a mere written examination. It has endeavored to be just without being arbitrary and has, it seems to many of us, succeeded in allaying much of the popular prejudice against the Board.

Once again, the American Medical Association meets on the coast, meets in Los Angeles. In a very large sense the Association will not be the guest of the committee of arrangements nor of the city or county of Los Angeles, but of the State of California. It behooves every member of this society to be present at that meeting; and not that alone but, when present, to assume the responsibilities of hostship. Incidentally, this meeting will arouse general interest in the A. M. A. If our county societies are prepared to work they can gather 500 new members. There will be opportunity, too, for effort among the people. The meetings will be given newspaper publicity, the laity will be interested, we should acquaint it with the objects and functions of the association.

Each year some of us resign our burdens and pleasures to enter eternity. Half a line in the JOURNAL is all the notice we take of such. Would it not be well to appoint a necrologist who would give us an epitome of the salient points in the lives of those we miss, some recognition of the work they have accomplished, the good they have done. Now and then there is inspiration in a knowledge of what others have achieved, and even the lowliest of us deserves some graceful memorial. The report of the necrologist need not be long, nor need it occupy a place in our already overburdened program. It could be published in the last issue of the JOURNAL prior to our annual meeting.

Last November the census bureau published another appeal for an accurate registration of births. Not one state, not even a single city of our land possesses complete registration. It has been remarked that vital statistics constitute the bookkeeping of humanity, they are fundamental to the practical application of hygiene, the foundation of scientific public health work. The census bureau affirms that rates of infantile mortality cannot be given for any area in America because of imperfect registration of births and that, for the same reason, no accurate general mortality tables can be constructed. The international life tables exclude the semi-civilized countries of Turkey, China. The United States of America and Mexico because of

absent or imperfect records. Let us, by all means, assist our State Board of Health in making California statistics reliable.

In conclusion, allow me to place special stress upon the social life of this society. Too many of us regard our colleagues as rivals. Competition is keen, monetary demands are pressing and the pride of reputation stings when touched. We are apt to magnify our own success and the other fellow's failure. It is a very poor doctor indeed, who has never succeeded where a better man has failed. We forget that one has a right to be judged by his success rather than by his failures, and that while his failures occasionally fall into our hands his successes never do. We fail to remember that no one of us is always up to his own average. The corroding effects of professional jealousy hamper us in many ways. In some localities the disease seems especially virulent, in others it is more or less under control. I do not know any better remedy for it than close acquaintance. The better we know our fellow practitioner the better fellow he seems to be, as a rule. A quiet talk with a man we do not like very well often helps us to like him better, does both of us more good than to listen to his erudite paper. The member who only comes to read his contribution, then hikes off again, does not get much out of the meeting or say many good words about it afterward. Let us get better acquainted, that we may like each other better and, in particular, let the one who has attended a meeting or two welcome the one who has never been here before, so that he may want to come again. What we most need is a feeling of solidarity.

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES AT THE 41ST ANNUAL SESSION OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA, CAL., APRIL 18 and 19, 1911.

FIRST SESSION, April 18th: The house was called to order by the president, Dr. John C. King, at 8:45 p. m. The secretary called the roll and 61 delegates responded.

The report of the secretary was read and the chair announced that, following the usual custom, he would appoint a committee, to be known as the Reference Committee on New Business.

The president appointed the following committee: Dr. Geo. H. Kress, chairman; Dr. Stanley Stillman and Dr. G. G. Moseley. The report of the secretary was referred to this committee.

The report of the Council was read by the chairman, Dr. C. G. Kenyon, and referred to the above committee.

The Committee on Scientific Work reported verbally by its chairman, Dr. Andrew Stewart Lobinger.

The Committee on Public Policy and Legislation reported verbally by its chairman, Dr. O. D. Hamlin.

The Committee on Arrangements reported verbally by one of its members, Dr. Rexwald Brown, in the absence of its chairman, Dr. T. A. Stoddard.